

THE
OPINION

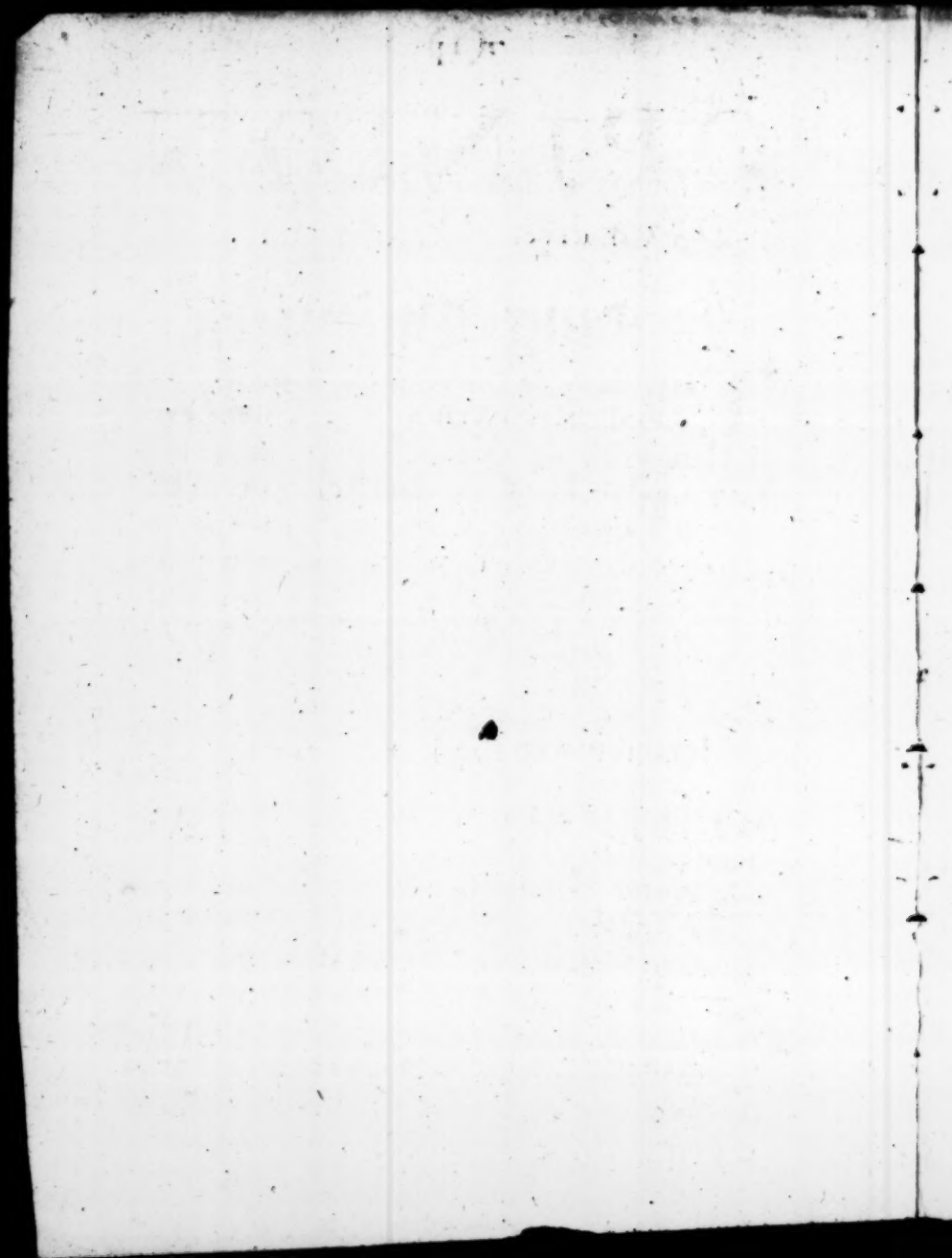
Of divers Learned and
Leading Dissenters.

Concerning the
ORIGINAL
OF
GOVERNMENT.

Referring to the Doctrine of the
POLITICAL CATECHISM.

THE FIRST SPECIMEN.

London, Printed in the Year, 1680.



*The Opinion of divers Learned and Leading
Dissenters, &c.*

Propos. I.

THat there be Government *in genere*, and Obedience thereunto, is determined even in Nature, by the God of Nature, in making Man a sociable Creature, and each man insufficient for himself; and in making Republicks necessary to the welfare and safety of Individuals, and Government necessary to these Republicks.

Prop. II.

Prop. II. Rulers therefore are Gods Officers, placed under him in his Kingdom, as he is the Universal Absolute Sovereign of the World: and they receive their Power from God, who is the onely Original of Power. Not only their Strength from his Strength, but their Authority, or Governing Power (which is *Jus Regendi*) from his Supreme Authority, as Mayors and Bailiffs in Corporations receive their Power from the King, *Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3.* *There is no Power but of God: the Powers that be are ordained of God.* This Governing Power *in genere*, is not an empty Name; but in the Institution containeth in it those things materially,

terially, which are absolutely necessary to the end of Government.

Propos. III.

Yet God hath left that which is commonly called the Specification of Government, and some lower parts of the Matter and Manner of Exercise undetermined; as also the Individual Persons or Families that shall Rule. In these three therefore it is that Communities interpose.

1. Whether, the Sovereignty shall be in One, or Two, or in Ten, or How many, and How divided for their Exercise, God hath not determined.

2. Nor hath he determined of every particular, whether the Power shall extend to this, or that, or the other thing, or not? nor whether it shall be exercised thus, or thus, by standing Courts, or Temporary Judges, &c.

3. Nor hath he named the Person or Family that shall Rule.

Prop. IV.

Though these in the Constitution are determined of by Explicit or Implicit Contract or Consent between the Ruler and the Community, yet by none of these three can the People be truly and properly said to give the Ruler his Power of Government, not by the first, or last; for both those do but determine who shall be the Recipient of that Power, whether One or more? and who individually. Not the second; for that is but a limiting,

miting, or bounding, or regulating the Governing Power, that it be not exercised to their hurt: The bounding and regulating of their Power, is not the giving them Power. The People having the strength, cannot be ruled against their concordant wills. And therefore if they contract with their Governours, that they will be ruled thus and thus, or not at all, this is not to give them power: Yet propriety they have, and there they may be Givers. So that this bounding or regulating, and choosing of the Form, and Persons, and giving of their Propriety, is all that they have to do. And the choosing of the Family or Person, is not at all a giving the power. They are but *sine quibus non* to that; they do but open the Door to let in the Governour: they do but name the Family or Man to whom God, and not they, shall give the Power.

As when God hath already determined what Authority the Husband shall have over the Wife, the Wife by choosing him to be her Husband, giveth him not his power, but onely chooseth the Man to whom God giveth it by his standing Law. Though about the disposing of her Estate, she may limit him by Pre-Contracts, but if she contract against his Government, it is a contradiction and null. Nor if he abuse his Power, doth it at all fall into her hands. If the King by Charter, give power to a Corporation to choose their Mayor,
or

or other Officer, they do but nominate the Persons that shall receive it; but it is the Kings Charter, and not they that give him the power. If a Souldier voluntarily list himself under the Kings General, or other Commanders, he doth but choose the Man that shall command him; but it is the Kings Commission that giveth him the power to command those that voluntarily so list themselves. And if the Authority be abused, or forfeited, it is not into the Souldiers hands, but into the Kings.

Propos. V.

The Constituting-Consent or Contract of Ancestors obligeth all their Posterity, (if they will have any of the Protection, or other benefit of Government) to stand to the Constitution: else Governours should be so unsetled and mutable, as to be incapable of their proper end.

Prop. VI.

God hath neither in Nature nor Scripture estated this power of Government, in whole or in part, upon the People of meer Community (much less on Subjects) whether Noble or Ignoble, Learned or Unlearned, the part of Community, or the whole Body Real or Representative; the People (as such) have not this power either to Use or Give. But the absolute Sovereign of all the World doth communicate the Sovereign Power in every Kingdom, or other sort of Commonwealth,

wealth, from himself immediately, I say immediately, not without the Mediation of an Instrument signifying his Will : for the Law of Nature and Scripture are his Instrument, and the Charter of Authority. Nor yet so immediately as without any kind of Mediation ; for the consent and nomination of the Community before expressed, may be *conditio sine qua non*, so far as aforesaid. But it is so immediately from God, as there is no immediate Recipient to receive the power first from God, and convey it to the Sovereign.

Prop. VII.

The Natural power of individual persons over themselves, is *tota specie* different from this Political or Civil power. And it is not the Individuals Resignation of this Natural power of Self-Disposal unto One or more, which is the efficient cause of Sovereignty or Civil power.

Prop. VIII.

If you take the Word **Law** properly for the expression of a Rulers Will obliging the Governed, or making their Duty ; and not improperly for meer Contracts between the Sovereign and the People, then it is clear in the Definition it self, that neither Subjects nor the Community (as such) have any Legislative power. Neither Nature nor Scripture hath given the People a power of making Laws, either by themselves or with the Sovereign. Either the sole Power or a part of it,

it, but the very Nature of Government requireth, that the whole Legislative power, that is, the Power of making Governing Laws belong to the *Summa Majestas*, or Sovereign alone, (unless when the *Summa Potestas* is in many hands, you compare the Partakers among themselves, and call one Party the Sovereign, as having more of the Sovereignty than the rest) for those that are not Governours at all, cannot perform the chief Act of Government, which is the making of Governing Laws: but the People are not Governours at all, either as a Community, or as Subjects: so that you may easily perceive that all the Arguments for a Natural Democracy are built upon false Suppositions; and when ever the People have any part in the Sovereignty, it is by the After-Constitution, and not by Nature; and that Kings receive not their Power from the Peoples Gift, (who never had it themselves to use or give) but from God alone.

Prop. IX.

Though God hath not made an universal Determination for any one sort of Government against the Rest (whether Monarchy, Aristocracy, Democracy) because that is the best for One People, which may be worse for Others, yet ordinarily Monarchy is accounted better then Aristocracy, and Aristocracy better then Democracy. So much briefly of the Original Power.

F I N I S.